

Message Text

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11

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 IO-14 SCI-06 SAJ-01 NIC-01 DRC-01 /113 W

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P 300746Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4046

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 3430

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS, US

SUBJECT: CASE OF CSM CORRESPONDENT ELIZABETH POND

REF: SEOUL 3370

1. I TOOK OCCASION HIS ATTENDANCE AT USIS-SPONSORED MUSICAL PERFORMANCE LAST EVENING TO RAISE POND CASE WITH FON MIN KIM DONG-JO. I TOLD HIM THAT OUR CONCERNS WITH ROKG DECISION TO EXCLUDE POND FROM KOREA WERE LARGELY IDENTICAL WITH THOSE AMB HABIB HAD EXPRESSED IN EARLIER CASE OF NEWSWEEK'S BERNIE KRISHER. I EMPHASIZED THAT ONCE ROKG DECISION BECAME PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE, OTHER AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS WOULD RALLY BEHIND POND REGARDLESS MERITS HER REPORTING AND THAT RESULTANT ADDITIONAL CRITICISM OF ROKG WOULD BE MORE DAMAGING TO KOREAN IMAGE THAN EXCLUSION OF ANY INDIVIDUAL CORRESPONDENT WOULD SEEM TO WARRANT. I ADDED THAT WHILE I HAD NO INSTRUCTIONS ON SUBJECT, IT LIKELY THAT U.S. SPOKESMAN, IF ASKED ABOUT POND CASE, WOULD BE FORCED PUBLICLY TO VOICE CONCERN OVER ROKG ACTION.

2. FON MIN SAID THAT IN KRISHER CASE, HE HAD AGREED WITH OUR POSITION AND HAD IN FACT SUPPORTED IT. HOWEVER, MAY 22 POND ARTICLE HAD GONE MUCH TOO FAR, PARTICULARLY IN ITS PERSONAL ALLUSIONS TO PRESIDENT PARK, AND HE FELT THAT DECISION TAKEN WAS ONLY ONE OPEN TO ROKG.

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3. I EXPRESSED HOPE THAT ROKG WOULD NOT ACT HASTILY, SINCE IT APPEARED THAT EXPERIENCED JOURNALIST LIKE POND MUST HAVE ANTICIPATED ROKG REACTION TO HER ARTICLE. FON MIN REPLIED THAT ROK EMBASSY TOKYO HAD INFORMED HIM THAT POND IS EXPECTING TRANSFER IN AUGUST TO MOSCOW. HE HAD ACCORDINGLY REQUESTED ROK AGENCIES TO STUDY QUESTION OF WHETHER ROKG SHOULD REVOKE INSTRUCTIONS TO NOTIFY HER NOW OF ROKG DECISION. UNFORTUNATELY, AMBASSADOR HAHM IN WASHINGTON HAD ACTED VERY PROMPTLY ON HIS INSTRUCTIONS AND HAD SCHEDULED LUNCHEON MEETING WITH CSM MANAGEMENT ON MAY 28.

4. FON MIN WAS AWARE THAT ASST SEC INGERSOLL HAD REQUESTED HAHM TO CALL FOR PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING POND CASE, BUT SAID HAHM INTENDED TO DO SO AFTER HIS MEETING WITH CSM MANAGEMENT.

5. COMMENT: CLEAR THAT POND'S REFERNCES TO PRESIDENT PARK HIT ROKG ON RAW NERVE ENDS AND THAT NEITHER FONMIN NOR OTHER ROK OFFICIALS WOULD HAVE ANY STOMACH FOR REOPENING DECISION ITSELF WITH BLUE HOUSE.
ERICSON

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